

FRANKLIN J. CRAWFORD

Interviewed by: Thomas Dunnigan

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Q: Today I will be talking with Franklin Crawford, who spent over a quarter of a century as a Foreign Service Officer, and served in a number of posts, with emphasis on the Middle East.

Why don't you tell us a little bit about your background, your education, where you grew up, and what interested you in the Foreign Service.

CRAWFORD: I was born in Columbus, Ohio, in 1927 and went to school there, grade school and high school. And then, in 1945, toward the end of the war, I enlisted in the Navy, so as not to be drafted into the Army. The war was over shortly thereafter, and I was discharged in 1946. I came back home and went to Ohio State University, where I got a bachelor's degree in history. Then I got an MA [master's degree] in history at Ohio State.

Q: Any particular branch of history you were interested in?

CRAWFORD: Mostly English Tudor history and ancient history. The ancient history awakened my interest in the Middle East, so I always had that as a background. One of the teachers I had, a man, whose name was Morley, taught a course in diplomatic history. I remember his telling tales. He had worked, I think, as a clerk, in the embassy in Warsaw sometime in the late '30s. I'm not certain about that, but that's my recollection after 55 years. I remember his telling tales about Brown's Codebook and I thought, "This is all very interesting."

I was working on my Master's [degree], and I saw a notice on the University Hall bulletin board that said, "Foreign Service Exam being held in Cincinnati." I thought this would be a good opportunity for me to ask my father to lend me some money, which I was always hesitant to do. I did go to Cincinnati; I took the test, and passed it.

In the meantime, I was hired by General Electric and went to Schenectady, New York for about a year. It took a long time before you ever heard from the Foreign Service. Then I found that I had passed the written Foreign Service exam but I hadn't passed the French. So in Schenectady I took some French courses at Union College, and then I went to New York once to take the French exam. I passed it [the exam] and some months later I got word that I'd been accepted and to come to Washington.

Q: When did you come to Washington, then?

CRAWFORD: I came in October 1951 to the Foreign Service Institute, for the basic A-100.

Q: You got your first assignment out of the Institute, then.

CRAWFORD: That's right, I went to Hong Kong in January of 1952.

Q: How did you go, by ship?

CRAWFORD: No, I flew: Washington [DC] to Columbus, Ohio to San Francisco and then those old Pan American clippers. There was some famous movie star on the clipper...Caesar Romero. He was chatting everybody up.

Q: In Hong Kong, you were assigned to do consular work?

CRAWFORD: Yes. I was assigned to the citizenship unit. We had hundreds, if not thousands, of applicants, most of the frauds. So we processed these cases. We didn't exactly have a quota, but the object was to get the thing done because there was an enormous backlog of these cases and there was a lot of pressure from Washington, a lot of Congressional pressure from Senators and Representatives who had large Chinese constituencies. There was a man named Hiram Fong.

Q: I remember, Fong was famous even in my day. He was in Honolulu, at recall.

CRAWFORD: I remember that name. He had lots of clients. He wrote letters to us and to Congress. We had one case in the morning and one case in the afternoon, and there must have been 12 or 15 of us doing this. We all sat in some great big bullpen.

Q: And as I recall, they had to do most of the interviewing through interpreters because these people spoke the Toi Shan dialect.

Who was the chief of the consular section?

CRAWFORD: Harold Montamat was the chief of the consular section. Later, a fellow named Buck Backe took his place. Monty was a great guy, really a wonderful person. He didn't have a very good reputation in the Department [of State], he was too much of an iconoclast.

Q: Who was the consul general at the time?

CRAWFORD: When I got there, Walter McConaughy was consul general, and Dave McKillop was the number two. And then, Julian Harrington came and took McCarnegie's place.

Q: What problems did you face, besides the usual fraud issues?

CRAWFORD: We didn't have any problems, except that all of us thought it was a great joke, the way we processed these people. We had this system with a list of questions that we asked, and we had these two interpreters who had applicants drawing pictures of their village; they'd say, "This is the village, and these are the houses, and there are seven houses," and so on, and then one of the standard questions was, "Where were the toilets?" I remember one of my applicants had done this, and I said, "Which toilet did you use?" And she said, "Whichever was unoccupied."

Q: Did the fact that we were, at that time, fighting the Chinese communists in Korea have any impact on your work at all?

CRAWFORD: Certainly, in the background. We didn't have any direct connection with these affairs, we weren't following affairs on the Mainland. It was a part of the ambience, part of the whole atmosphere that these people were portrayed, or were portraying themselves, as anti-Communists, and they were fleeing from Communist China, and that was supposed to ring a lot of bells. You couldn't really deny that claim. But, it was obvious that they were fleeing for economic purposes.

Q: I didn't want to ask you about the refugee situation, but I knew at that time thousands came out from China, mainly for economic reasons, but some for political reasons.

CRAWFORD: Yes, there were a lot of political people [refugees] in Hong Kong, and we knew some of them, because the political section had a big effort to meet these people and interview them. And we heard a lot about it because we did a lot of socializing. I think there were some very good people there in the political section who did this, followed refugees. Sometimes we had to deal with them, that's later on; I switched from the Chinese fraud applicants to the regular citizenship office. Gil Duly was running it, but she went on home leave and so they put me into the passport/citizenship operation. I used to see a fair number of people who had come out from China and came in to have their passports renewed. We'd talk to them, and I knew from people like Chuck Cross, who was in the political section, and Art Hummel, and some others, something about these people's stories, the situations they came out of. There was a lot of interest.

Q: Yes, in my time a few years later, we had a refugee relief program, and this brought out a flock of investigators from Washington, to look into the credentials of people applying for these visas, but we won't get into that.

CRAWFORD: In 1953, there was a big RIF. Monty, the chief of the consular section, was hit by this RIF, and so he was selected out. He left to the great disappointment of everybody who had worked for him because he was a terrific man. His place was taken by Buck Backe. He wasn't so popular with the staff, because there was such affection for Monty, and they felt that Monty got kicked out unjustly, and this other man had come in to take his place.

There was an American woman whose name was Valerie Breingan, who was the General Services Officer. She was married to a Brit who was with some business in Hong Kong. As a local hire, she was also RIFed. So, there was this sudden vacancy in the General Services Office. So, I was assigned to be General Services Officer, which was such a relief to get out of that citizenship section. I had been there for the better part of a year, maybe eight or ten months. I had a Chinese woman who worked for me. She became a very good friend. She had worked for the Consulate General in Shanghai before. She said, after we got acquainted, "When you took this job, you sat in your office for a month and read the regulations, and you didn't do anything else. After that, it was impossible to find you." Q: Were you there for the Kowloon riots in 1952? Those were very tense days, I'm sure.

CRAWFORD: Well, I guess so, but I really wasn't aware of the tension. I know there were a couple of people, Bob Ballentine was one, and some guy who worked for USIS, were somehow involved. They weren't hurt, but they encountered these rioters. Several of us had been...Actually, I was living in Kowloon at the time, but I had gone over to the Island. I had spent part of the day at the consulate and went back in the evening. People on the Island, people I ran into, didn't seem to know anything about it, it all came as a big surprise when we took the Star Ferry back.

Q: Were there any plans to replace the Garden Road Building when you were there?

CRAWFORD: If there were, I wasn't really aware of it. I think there might have been something, because it was sort of a shambles, that building. I did go back to Hong Kong once sometime in the '60s, and saw the new building, what had changed.

Q: Lastly, about Hong Kong, was not one of the consular people there put in the Leavenwood?

CRAWFORD: No, that happened before. It happened sometime in 1950 or 51. This was the man who was selling visas or citizenship papers. I remember, after I had taken the Foreign Service exam, there was a story in the [New York] Times about this man who was arrested and then indicted, convicted finally, and somebody, probably my father, said, "Why do you want to get into a business like that?"

Q: Any other comments about your days in Hong Kong?

CRAWFORD: It was a wonderful place to live, but it was terribly confining. We used to party a lot. Someone asked some group that I was with, "Why do you people drink so much?" And somebody said, "It's the quickest way out of Hong Kong."

Anyway, the time came, after that I was reassigned to Turkey. I was delighted, because I was going to go to the Middle East. I had been thinking about maybe trying to specialize in Chinese, because people like Cross and others, John Heideman was one of them, they do China, and there's a lot of intellectual and political interest in that.

Q: You got assigned in 1954 to Izmir.

CRAWFORD: Right. First, I was assigned to Iran, to Meshed, but then that assignment was canceled before I got there, and I went to Izmir instead.

Q: You went there as consular officer and administrative officer?

CRAWFORD: Yes, I think it was an informal arrangement, but I did the administrative part of it, but I was [also] a vice consul.

Q: How large a post was it? How many Americans?

CRAWFORD: There were four Americans. There was a consul, a man named Ed Waggoner; and a vice consul, who did economic stuff named Bill Helseth; and myself. I was the junior member of that staff. There was also an American secretary.

Q: What were some of the problems there that you encountered?

CRAWFORD: First of all, I just loved the place. It was a crummy place to live compared to Hong Kong - the housing was awful, and you couldn't get this or that, and the Turkish lira wasn't worth anything and we were forced to deal at the official rate for most of the time that I was there. But I loved it, I was delighted to be in the Middle East and to the Turkish lessons, most of which I'd forgotten. The thing I liked about it there, every weekend you could go out someplace and see some historical, archeological site, which was a thing you couldn't do in Hong Kong, and I enjoyed it enormously.

The problems - I don't really remember the problems. We had the usual consular stuff. The big problem we had was with the military. We had a NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] headquarters in Izmir. The consulate got along fine with the NATO headquarters, we didn't have any problems, but they had a lot of young servicemen. I forget the size of that operation, but anyway, there were a lot of them around. They weren't always getting in trouble, but they sometimes did. We had some funny episodes. They had what they called these bars in Izmir, they were pick-up places. We called them "bowling alleys," because the girls who worked in the bar would sit next to some client and order "champagne," so-called, and they brought it in a great big bowl. That's why they were called "bowling alleys."

One of the servicemen got into a fight at one of these bowling alleys and he was arrested and accused of insulting the Turkish police. Because I was the consular officer, I had to go to see these people if they were in jail. I went to this man's trial and I remember it vividly.

Q: Didn't we have a status of force, an agreement, with Turkey?

CRAWFORD: Yes, but the status of force had just come into force, think sometime in 1954, I remember reading it at the time.

The NATO headquarters, which had a liaison in Istanbul, and they got someone in the Turkish army who was a lawyer, a Jew from Istanbul. He spoke all the languages, he spoke Turkish, and English, and French, and Armenian, he spoke everything. He came to represent this soldier. Nobody spoke English except the defendant and the lawyer. I wasn't involved, I was just sitting there. The landlord, the proprietor, of this bar was testifying that this man had insulted the Turkish police. The judge said, "What did he say?" The bar owner said, "He [the soldier] said, 'Toorkish police, fack you!' ('Turkish police, fuck you!')." Nobody understood it and so, they said, "What was that?" And they kept repeating it, because people hadn't heard it. Finally they got to, "What does this mean?" The judge asked the bar owner if he spoke English. He said, "No." And the judge said, "How do you know that's something bad?" The bar owner said, "Oh, all the sergeants say it." This smart lawyer from Istanbul explained to the court that this was a throwaway phrase and that there were examples in every language and it didn't mean anything. Finally, the judge bought it. The guy was let off and I think he left that night.

Q: Who was the ambassador at that time?

CRAWFORD: The ambassador when I got there was Avril Warren.

Q: Did he ever visit Izmir?

CRAWFORD: Oh, yes, he came down to Izmir. I have a nice picture of him. He and his wife came down. They were sort of fun, because he wasn't stuffy at all. He went to be ambassador of Finland. There was a picture of him on the front page of the Times, of Ambassador Warren stark naked at one of these Finnish saunas. He was out lying in the snow being beaten with bush rods. I don't think the Department [of State] thought that was so hot.

Q: How were your relations with the Turkish authorities in town, and in the region?

CRAWFORD: They were good. The consul, Ed Waggoner, was the one who kept in touch with the governor and most of the officials. But, I had some dealings with the police, because with visa applicants, you're always checking on whether girls were really straight out of the convent school if they said they were.

Q: How large was your consular district?

CRAWFORD: It was enormous. I couldn't tell you what the boundaries were, but it included most of southwest Turkey. The town called Manisa was the northern boundary, and it went down to the Mediterranean, and east as far as Antalya and Alanya.

Q: Did you get to travel much?

CRAWFORD: A fair amount. I went to Alanya and Antalya on the Mediterranean coast. I took a train from Izmir to a place called Burdur, and then from Burdu took a bus, a real adventure, down to Antalya.

I went with Ed Waggoner's wife, and a young woman who was working in the consulate. Oh I forgot, I said we had three [Americans in the consulate], we had four, because we had an American secretary.

Q: Did we have an intelligence presence there, CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]?

CRAWFORD: Not when I was there. There had been one before, and he left and wasn't replaced. Occasionally people would come down from Istanbul. There was a big event, the Izmir trade fair, a commercial fair that was held in Izmir every summer for a month. Someone from Istanbul would often come down, someone from the [Central Intelligence] Agency, would come down for that. And they'd be in the office. Actually, I met my wife that way. She worked for the Agency in Istanbul. I had met her before, once in Istanbul when I was on a trip. She came down one summer for one of these fairs.

Q: We were giving military aid to the Turks at this time. Did that come into your purview at all?

CRAWFORD: Not really. I mean, we were aware of the connection between the NATO presence and our military assistance. There were some "MAAG" operations around, but we weren't directly involved unless they needed some consular service.

Q: Of course, with the headquarters there and U.S. offices right there, you probably wouldn't get deeply involved.

CRAWFORD: Yes, the consul was in regular contact with the American officers, the commanding generals, and they had Turkish and Greek social affairs, and so we were all interested in the Turkish-Greek relationship. It was not very good and got worse.

Q: Was the Soviet bloc active in your area?

CRAWFORD: They didn't have a consulate there. There was a British consul general and a French consul general, and there was an Italian. But I don't think there were any Soviets.

Q: I'm surprised the Soviets weren't there in force, what with the NATO headquarters there, you would think they would want to be snooping around.

CRAWFORD: I think the Turks were very cautious about this sort of thing and kept them at arm's length. And of course, they had to support the United States. Of course, they (the Soviets) had a consul general in Istanbul.

Q: Have you thought of anything else?

CRAWFORD: Well, the big event happened when I was on leave in Italy. They had anti-Greek riots in Izmir in early September of 1955. There was a lot of destruction, more in Istanbul than anywhere else. There was some destruction in Izmir, but in Istanbul there was an enormous amount of destruction - Greek shops, and Armenians got the spillover. But, there were these riots in Izmir, and some mob got to the Greek consulate there. The Greek consul, whose name I can't remember, took refuge at our consulate. He came, and it was quite a ways away. By this time, Ed Waggoner had left and a temporary replacement, Will Chase, was there. He [Mr. Chase] took in the Greek consul and his wife and child. They stayed at the consulate for a couple of days.

I was off living it up in Italy, so I missed that. I missed the riot in Hong Kong, because I was on the wrong side. I missed the riot in Izmir. But, it was quite a development in Greek-Turkish relations.

Q: My experiences with Turkey lead me to believe that the Turkish police can control what they want to. They're pretty tough. They must have looked the other way during some of this.

CRAWFORD: Well they certainly didn't go out of their way. I don't really remember. I said there was some destruction, but I'm not sure. I don't think the Greek consulate was severely damaged, maybe a window was broken, but it wasn't burned down or anything.

Q: After your time in Izmir, which ended in 1956, you were sent oft to Princeton.

CRAWFORD: Well, first I came to Washington. I went to FSI and I did Persian language training. From January 1956 to about August 1956. I was at FSI and studied Persian six hours a day.

Q: What interested you in Persian, especially having come from one difficult language area, in Turkey, to go to another one? Was it your general interest in the Middle East?

CRAWFORD: Yes. Persia was of particular interest. I remembered a history course from college on the Middle East and the professor (McDonald was his name) really got excited about Alexander the Great and his conquest of the Persians, so I knew all these names. When I was in Izmir, Ed Waggoner was in charge, but when I first got there Kay Bracken was there. She was there temporarily before going on to Istanbul, because the Waggoners were away on leave. She had been in Greece, she'd been in Iran, she'd been in Turkey, and she loved that part of the world. And she really excited my interest in it. And she thought there was some sort of a joint specialty of Turkish-Persian, so she said, "Why don't you apply for that?" So I did and FSI wrote back and said, "We've never heard of that." "There is a Persian course and we are looking for people who are interested in Persian," so I said, "Fine."

Q: Was the language training good at FSI at the time?

CRAWFORD: Yes, it was great then. You know, you've taken it. You really get sort of bored, particularly in the summertime or late in the afternoon. I had great fun with the tutors. Two Iranians. They were really nice guys, students. I suppose they are still here. One was the scion of some well-known family in Iran and the other was a nobody. They were good friends and that was fun. I liked it at FSI. There were some very good people there. A man who was a Chinese specialist (Howard Sollenberger) who was the head of the language program and some very interesting linguists were there.

Q: Then you went to Princeton.

CRAWFORD: Yes. I went to Princeton for an academic year.

Q: That was targeted at Middle East studies?

CRAWFORD: Yes. It was Middle East studies, but for me it was primarily Iran, but we studied some other stuff on Turkey and also on Arab-Israeli problems and things like that.

Q: Was Bernard Lewis there at the time?

CRAWFORD: No. He wasn't there. Cuyler Young was the head of the Near East program and Philip Hitti had been the head of that department. He was retired, but he was still around. There were about three or four others who were Middle East specialists. Some Arabists, some Turkish, some Persian.

Q: Were you able to keep up your language training while you were taking the area courses at Princeton?

CRAWFORD: Yes. I did. I had a tutor. He was not nearly as good as the ones at FSI and he had all sorts of hang-ups. He was angry about everything. Some of these people were angry about the American part in toppling Mossadegh. We heard all about this and I told one of them as he was explaining how emotionally involved Iranians were about Mossadegh and so on. I said, "Americans think that he is a kind of figure of fun. He came to Washington in '51 and I happened to see his motorcade and there wasn't anyone in the backseat. We all thought it was because he had his pajamas on and he was taking a nap." People sort of laughed. Here's this man who is supposed to be the head of Iran and he is going around in his pajamas. He said to me, "If the British had done to your country what the British did to our country, you'd be crying." I had said that Mossadegh was sitting around in his pajamas and crying. I said, "No. That's the difference between us. We wouldn't cry about something like that."

Q: Those were interesting days, all right. I was in London when Mossadegh came in and our British contacts were very excited about that.

You finished the year at Princeton, which I gather from your point of view was very worthwhile.

CRAWFORD: Yes. It was terrific.

Q: And then you got an [onward] assignment to the Iranian area, to Isfahan and you went out as principal officer. How large a post was that?

CRAWFORD: Not very big. We had three vice consuls, one was from the [Central Intelligence] Agency, one man from USIA [United States Information Agency], and one vice consul who did consular work and other stuff, and myself. I think that was it.

Q: How far is that from Tehran? Is it south?

CRAWFORD: It is south of Tehran. It must be 250-300 miles. It was long day's drive.

Q: Did you find the local Iranians easy to work with?

CRAWFORD: Yes. They were very nice. I love Iran. We had a great time there. We were there for five years. And three of our children were born in Iran, one in Isfahan and two in Tehran. I found it to be a lovely place. The Iranians were very accessible and we were in Isfahan for three years, and after three years you've sort of been through the routine. I wasn't sorry to be transferred to Tehran.

Q: Where were there other consulates in Isfahan?

CRAWFORD: There was a French consular agent who was really a businessman, but he did some consular work. There was a Soviet consulate in Isfahan, but they closed it at the time of Mossadegh's fall. I think it was closed then. They had a caretaker there. I think he was Russian. Occasionally somebody from the embassy in Tehran would come to Isfahan to stay at the consulate. I don't know what they went there for. I never encountered any Russians in Isfahan. It was just something I heard through the grapevine.

Q: The British didn't have a consulate there?

CRAWFORD: Not then. They did, later, after we were there for a while. They opened a British Council office and they had an operation there. I think there was a British Council operation in Shiraz. But when we first got there the British didn't have anything.

Q: What were some of the problems you faced in Isfahan, if there were problems?

CRAWFORD: Depending on what the political coloration was (and everybody on the spectrum was represented), they would ask, "Why was the United States treating Iran the way it did?" The National Front group, the pro-Mossadegh group would say, "Your people did this terrible thing to our country and the National Front wants to come back and we need your help." I heard this all the time I was in Iran. That was part of the on-going conversation. And the members of the establishment would sometimes gripe that economic aid to Iran wasn't enough or it wasn't well thought out and they would have all sorts of suggestions and gripes about it. I wouldn't say it was a major problem. We had an Iran-American society in Isfahan that was open when I got there.

Q: How would you measure the size or the influence of the National Front versus the pro-Shah party? Were they about equal in sentiment?

CRAWFORD: No. The National Front had not much support. The National Fronters were well educated, modernized, westernized, but they wanted somebody else to do it for them. They wanted the Americans to go tell the Shah to do this, that and the other thing. I don't think they had widespread support. There was a lot of griping about the Shah. That was a constant wherever you went. The officials didn't really gripe about the Shah except indirectly sometimes. They'd complain about Tehran and how they weren't getting enough support. But when I was there, at least when I was in Isfahan there was a sort of passive attitude. There had been a lot of dislocation, a lot of psychological and political damage done, during the Mossadegh era and in the effort to overthrow Mossadegh. So Iranians had gone through several millennia of invasions and disasters and so on, so they were very good at deciding about whether this thing was going to last or not and where their interests really were. And their interests were primarily with their families and with the clans and with the tribes and with their neighborhoods, not with any national entity.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

CRAWFORD: The first ambassador when I was there was Selden Chapin, and his place was taken by Tom Wailes. Wailes came while I was still in Isfahan, and was still ambassador when I got to Tehran. And then Julius Holmes came.

Q: Did you get to Tehran often?

CRAWFORD: Fairly often.

Q: Did those ambassadors visit Isfahan?

CRAWFORD: Yes. They all came down. The attaché½ had a plane and so the ambassadors would come and mostly spend the day. Sometimes they came for a couple of days, particularly if they had visitors and they wanted to show them Isfahan and Shiraz. So I got hooked up with those visits.

Q: How large was your consular district?

CRAWFORD: Enormous. We had Isfahan, up as far as Kashan and down to the Persian Gulf. It included Shiraz. We had Bandar-e-Abbas and Kerman and everything east to the Pakistani border.

Q: And you got to move around there?

CRAWFORD: I did, yes. That was our job, really. Finding out where these places were and writing reports. We took trips, particularly with the [Central Intelligence] Agency man. He and I took several trips. I went to Shiraz fairly often, because that was an easy flight down there. We went to Kerman and Bandar-e-Abbas overland. It was a long, long trip. I think that both times we managed to get a flight back. There was another time that I went to Kerman and then to Zahedan, which is near the Pakistani border, near Quetta. And then down along the Pakistani border to Chabahar, which now is a sizeable port city, but then it was a tiny little town that didn't have any piers or docks. It was the farthest reach of southeastern Iran. Then I think the ambassador might have come in an attaché ½ plane and picked us up in Chabahar and we went to Bandar-e-Abbas and then back to Isfahan.

Q: So you did get to get around at this time?

CRAWFORD: Oh, yes. And then we'd write reports on where we went and whom we'd met. I'd like to read them again. There were a lot of interesting encounters. You would also pick up a certain amount of flavor.

Q: President Eisenhower visited Iran during that period. Did you have anything to do with that trip?

CRAWFORD: No, I didn't. I knew he was coming, because that was in '59 and he was on his way to Tehran, then on to Afghanistan, where I think he had a stroke, or heart attack. Charlie Stelle, who was political counselor in Tehran, was home on leave at the same time. We came back on the same ship to Naples. Charlie had to rush off to get back to Tehran for Eisenhower.

One nice thing about Isfahan, we had lots of visitors. The German Chancellor [Ludwig] Erhard came. Lord [Louis] Mountbatten came. I'd always get invited because they were looking out for someone who spoke English, or instead just some presentable foreigner they could invite to the governor general's lunch. The governor general usually didn't speak anything except Persian.

There was a man who was in the Iran-American Society who taught English. His name was Terrence O'Donnell. Funny fellow, nice guy, but sort of eccentric. He wrote two books. One is a wonderful book about Iran. It's called *The Garden of the Brave in War*, published about 1980. He wrote another a book, a series of sketches, called *Seven Shades of Memory*. He's done one of these oral histories for somebody, and I mention this because I think it would be a good cross-reference for somebody. He described our time in Isfahan, he knew us. This was another perspective of me and my wife. He told me that he described us and what our household was like. His books are very good for that period, for looking at the flavor of the place.

Q: Now, you had spent some time in Khorramshahr.

CRAWFORD: I went to Khorramshahr for about three weeks, because the consul there was due for leave, he was going to Europe. So my wife and I got sent down there. We spent three weeks there, and then went on to Isfahan.

Q: No problems in Khorramshahr worth talking about?

CRAWFORD: No. I mean, it was hot. And, it was an introduction to thoil business.

Q: And right across from Iraq.

CRAWFORD: Iraq, Basra. We did go to Basra. The consulate had a boat. We took the boat up to Basra one day.

Q: Then in 1960 you were transferred to Tehran. You went there in thpolitical section?

CRAWFORD: Right. I did the domestic politics for Iran. It helped, having been in the provinces, to come to Tehran. I knew people from Tehran and had some notion of what was going on. It was a wonderful assignment.

Q: How large was the political section?

CRAWFORD: I think we were maybe five or six people. The counselor for political affairs, a man named Harry Schwartz, was probably the best boss I ever had, irascible as hell, some days, but really a fine person.

Q: Of those in the political section, how many were language officers?

CRAWFORD: At some point there were two others who were language officers, and one I remember who wasn't. A fellow named Joe Lorenz was a post language officer, and Pat Mulligan. He was Persian language.

Q: Did we have contact with the opposition at that time?

CRAWFORD: Not very much. That was always a sore point within the embassy and between the embassy and the government. I was in Isfahan and sort of out of it, but I heard a lot. A fellow named John Bowling was the effective head of the political section. He was aware of this conflict and the need to find out about what was going on, but also of the great reluctance on the part of the embassy to do anything that would upset the Shah. One of the stories that was told (I heard this from John), was the man who was the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] before I got there had a slogan. If anybody started criticizing the Shah or raising questions about the opposition, his mantra was, "Be a booster, not a knocker." That was supposed to be the message for everybody. This kind of contact was discouraged. The assumption was that if it needs to be done, the [Central Intelligence] Agency would do it.

Q: I guess that sowed the seeds of later trouble.

CRAWFORD: It certainly did. When I was there, it was very different. They (senior embassy officials) certainly weren't actively involved. Tom Wailes was a very nice man, but not very interested in the politics of it all. He told me once, "Let Stuart do it." (Stuart Rockwell was the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission]). He said, "I'm an administrative type. I prefer that sort of thing."

Julius Holmes was completely different. He was a wonderful man, I thought. He came to Iran, and there was all this in the background about supporting the Shah and not dealing with the opposition. But, he recognized that a certain amount of this was necessary. He didn't encourage us to go out and cultivate the National Front, but he was aware that that was the sort of thing that needed to be done. He always applied the test: whatever we're going to do, is it in the national interest of the United States? It was a test that hadn't been applied before. The test earlier was, "Let's not upset the Shah," and not whether it's good or bad for the United States.

When I was in Tehran, I knew a lot of National Front people, because I was a good friend of somebody in the [Central Intelligence] Agency. We used to entertain back and forth. We'd have people at one another's house, had lunch with these people. They were all nice, good people, international types, well-educated, spoke English and French. Through my friend, who is unfortunately deceased, I met a lot of them and got some flavor of what they were into. Some were more radical than others.

Q: Did we have any military program with at that time?

CRAWFORD: We had two programs. One was called "Armish MAAG," which was the military assistance group, which was headquartered in Tehran. At one point in 1958, when the king of Iraq was overthrown, we had a big military buildup. That was a potential problem we had in Isfahan, because suddenly we had three or four dozen American soldiers coming into Isfahan, staying at a hotel downtown. I was scared to death that we'd have some incident. I kept fussing with the colonel who was in charge of all of them, about not doing this and not offending the populace and so on. Fortunately, we never had any incident. I attribute that to the fact that I was such a nag. Whether that's true or not, I don't know. Anyway, they came in and were spread throughout the country. In Tehran, there was a big presence. They were mostly working with units of the Iranian military, both the army and the air force and the navy. Then we had the Gendarmerie mission. Schwarzkopf was there; he went in the middle of the war, about 1943. He established the Gendarmerie mission, which still existed. Actually, his son, the one who was the Persian Gulf commander, Norman, Jr., was there as a child or as a young man.

Q: He was. I know that because, Steve Palmer, unfortunately deceased, told me one time that he was a teacher before he joined the Foreign Service, and he taught in Iran, and young Schwarzkopf was one of his students.

CRAWFORD: Anyway, that was the military operation. And of course there was an enormous economic assistance program, which I said something about once when I was traveling around in one of the districts and (they were AID programs, we'd call them "Point Four") and hear a certain amount of complaint about that. That prompted me (when I was in Isfahan) to write a dispatch, which I thought would get me dismissed, because the question I asked was "what use is this economic assistance? Does it accomplish anything or does it cause more trouble than it's worth?" Anyway, my dispatch didn't upset anybody. Everybody I heard from said, "Oh. That's terrific. You've raised a lot of interesting questions here."

Q: "Now go away." [laughter.]

Well, those are very interesting years in Iran. Any further comment about your time there at all?

CRAWFORD: No. I think we've covered it pretty well.

Q: Then you got transferred back to the [State] Department, to INR [Office of Research] as the analyst for Iran. Had you requested this or did this come out of the blue?

CRAWFORD: No. I hadn't really requested it. But a fellow named Don Eddy who had been in Izmir when I was there had been in INR and he came out on some trip to Tehran when I was due for assignment and he said something to me about it. And I said, "Well, I wouldn't mind that. I've been doing this sort of active or operational stuff, and I wouldn't mind a spell were you would sort of read and think about it." So I said, "Okay, I'd be willing to do that." So I was assigned there. As it turned out Donald Eddy wasn't there anymore and I found the experience in INR very unhappy.

Q: Who was your chief there?

CRAWFORD: Oh, I can't remember. Herbert Labesney was the great expert on the Middle East. He was the deputy chief of the NEA unit and the guy who was number one I forget.

Q: Who was the director of INR at the time?

CRAWFORD: Tom Hughes, who came in with the Kennedy Administration.

Q: Did you have any problems?

CRAWFORD: Well, my problem was that the whole organization was so flaccid, I guess the word is, they were only interested in grinding out daily intelligence things. My patience broke when, after they wanted some piece, Lebesny and whoever the head was wanted some piece on Iran, which I wrote in a timely fashion. I gave it to them and it sat in their in-boxes for something like six weeks. And then I complained. I said, "Look, I don't want to do this sort of stuff." So eventually I complained to Hughes and I got transferred, but I was there for a year. I met some nice people there, but...

Q: When you were in INR, how were your relations with the Iraniadesk or didn't they have one?

CRAWFORD: Oh, yes. They were fine. They were good. Because, for thmost part, I knew more about Iran than the people on the desk.

Q: Yes, I can believe that. Did you get the feeling that Iran was getting any high-level attention in the [State] Department or was it one of the many countries that didn't?

CRAWFORD: Well, it wasn't getting all that much. It would occasionally get high-level attention when the Shah would get his nose out of joint, as he often did. I think once in 1959 and several times later he sort of threatened to take up with the Soviets and when he did that in 1959 we went spastic. Instead of just saying to the Shah, "Well, fine, go ahead." We didn't do that, we were so wrapped up in the Cold War and nobody had the guts to do that sort of thing. If they had said that, the Shah would have said, "Well, I didn't really mean it." But, anyway, when that sort of thing happened, as one example of high-level interest, the Iranian ambassador here was coming in constantly to express the apprehension of the Iranian government about some guy who had written some sort of an exposé^{1/2} on Iran saying that the Shah and the American ambassador and a lot of other people were involved in all sorts of corruption and shady deals and so on. I think his name was Gudarzi. We always assured the Iranians that the U.S. government at the very highest level was very concerned about this thing and that everybody was working on it. Once an Iranian official came in to see Rusk (I wasn't in this meeting). The Iranian was talking about this problem and, of course Rusk had been briefed and had been assured that we were on top of this problem. And he asked about this and Rusk leaned over the note taker, assuming the man's name was Taligani, but that wasn't it, and Rusk said to the note taker, "What's a Taligani?" [Laughter.] That was a perfect example of how piqued the interest was.

Q: You mentioned that you then moved out of INR and then went over to the India desk in the Department. How large was that desk?

CRAWFORD: Well, there was an officer in charge of Indian Affairs, a guy named Dave Schneider, and two desk officers, Pete Lakeland and myself. And that was a part of SOA [South Asian Affairs] which was, all together, must have been about 12 people.

Q: Did you get to visit India?

CRAWFORD: I did. I took a trip to India and my mentor, Pete Lakeland, who'd spent a lot of time in India, told me what to read and where to go. He told me to read Kim first and he told me where to go. And Carol Laise, who was the deputy office director, was very upset about this itinerary because I was going to all of these touristic spots and why didn't I go to visit the steel mills and the "modern India," but I didn't. I followed the advice of Lakeland and she didn't insist that I give up all of those other things. I saw a lot of India.

Q: We were giving military aid to India by this time, weren't we?

CRAWFORD: That's what I did. The Chinese attacked the Indians in 1962 and scared the hell out of them. So the U.S. government said, "Fine, we'll give you military assistance" because it was against the Chinese. So then the Indians became very difficult about everything. I mean when they were scared they were glad to have everything and let you do anything you wanted to do, but as soon as they regained their balance, they wanted to have a standoffish attitude. They were neutral except when they wanted some help. I found on the India desk, I must have been the Cold Warrior. Some of these people were India lovers and there was some guy who worked on Pakistan affairs. His name was Hal Josif and ten years before he had been the India desk officer when we hated India, sometime in the mid-1950s. And he came back in a later incarnation as the Pakistani desk officer when we hated Pakistan. I thought, "How awful."

Q: He has all the breaks. [laughter]

CRAWFORD: Yes, right.

Q: What role did Ambassador Galbraith play in our policy toward India?

CRAWFORD: Well, Galbraith had gone by the time I got to the desk. An enormous amount. I mean, he was sort of a colorful figure and very good with words. He wrote these long telegrams. I don't really know how much attention the White House or the NSC [National Security Council] staff paid to him, but people like Jim Spain (I think he was on the NSC staff at the time) and Howard Wriggins and Hal Saunders. They had a feel for what was going on in the White House. I never really knew. I knew when Chester Bowles was there that they didn't pay much attention. He was writing these long things like "Here's another opportunity to spend another five hundred million dollars and I'm going to tell the Indians on Friday that we are going to do it unless I hear otherwise." So then we'd have to scramble around and write telegrams.

Q: He was an example of what you talked about - the pro-Indians. Verpro-Indian.

CRAWFORD: Yes. Pete Lakeland had a lot of funny stories about him. One of them was that he was always amused that the Indians always pronounced his name "Chester Bowles."

Q: Were we concerned at all about the Kashmir problem at that time.

CRAWFORD: Oh, yes. Big thing. Do you know Dennis Kux? Dennis was on the desk when I worked there. He worked on Pakistan, I think. One of the jokes in the office was that Carol Laise, primarily, was always organizing things, and so we had new projects "Next Steps in India and Pakistan" and "Next Steps in Kashmir." And when I see Dennis now, we always laugh. I saw him when he was at DACOR [Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired] a couple of months ago, laughing. He said, "You'll be amused, I'm on this project now called "Next Steps in Kashmir."

Q: And we are still making those steps 25 years later.

Did we ever discuss India with the Soviet Union?

CRAWFORD: I don't know. I'm sure we did, but that was very much on the horizon or the agenda. The Soviet presence. That was something that Bowles was always doing. You know, "To counter the Soviet presence, let's build up the Indian navy." That was one project that he had.

Q: What was our position with regard to the Chinese-Indian border dispute, which has gone on forever?

CRAWFORD: Yes. I don't really know. I've forgotten the details. I think we were probably on the Indian side because we certainly wouldn't have been doing anything to placate the Chinese at that time.

Q: I noticed in today's paper for instance, there was a map of Kashmir in which this large chunk of eastern Kashmir is now in Chinese hands.

CRAWFORD: That's Ladach.

Q: Ladach, yes.

CRAWFORD: That was one of the key pieces of geography then.

Q: I guess in those days we couldn't have supported the Chinese. I would have been a bit out of character for us.

Was there any Congressional resistance to our increasing military aid to India?

CRAWFORD: I don't remember resistance as such, and again, my memory is no good on this. I think that there probably were some complaints because of India's neutrality. And I know there was sensitivity in the White House because when I was on the desk (this was about a year after the Chinese attack) the United States had set up a joint military operation with the Indians and it meant flying in. This was for AWACS, but it involved a lot of planes coming in and radar and stuff like that. And the Indians, when the thing had been proposed, welcomed it. So when the thing was ready, this period of time had past and they had regained their balance on domestic questions about why they were dealing with "these imperialists." Anyway, this group flew into Delhi and nobody was there. No high-level Indian was there. And the word got to the White House. The story we heard at the India desk was that [President] Kennedy said, "What's the matter with these goddamn people?" Somebody called Phil Talbot (who was the assistant secretary) and Talbot called the Indian foreign minister, I suppose, and said, "The U.S. government, at the highest level, is disturbed at this offhand attitude of the Indians." So the whole thing was restaged and done, I think the next day. They flew in again and I think the Indian defense minister, the prime minister was there, they were all there with open arms and pictures and so on.

Q: "Today we love you." [laughter]

CRAWFORD: "Now get the hell out." [more laughter]

Also, we were supporting Pakistan. On the India desk, I was always a supporter of Pakistan. I said, "You know, maybe the Pakistanis aren't any good, but they're giving us some real estate, and the Indians aren't giving us a damn thing."

Q: At that time the Pakistanis had already proposed a plebiscite iKashmir, but that never took, I gather.

CRAWFORD: Yes. I think they proposed that from the very beginning.

Q: That was even in the late 1940s or so.

CRAWFORD: Yes. I think that was shortly after partition.

Q: The Indians never bit on that, did they?

CRAWFORD: As far as I know, they still haven't.

Q: What was the effect of Nehru's death? Did that have any effect on Indian politics?

CRAWFORD: Yes. I suppose that was the beginning of the fracturing of the Congress Party. We were concerned because nobody likes change, and here we had this relationship that was not entirely satisfactory, but we understood it. And now we were going to have these other people and this fellow, Shastri, who came in as Nehru's successor - he was thought to be a nobody - and sort of a little man, both literally and figuratively. There was worry about that. On the part of the India desk there was some concern - what can we do for the Indians that will sort of bolster them in this time of tragedy and political upset?

Q: Transition and so forth.

CRAWFORD: That's the impression I had. I couldn't back it up with anything. Ask Dennis if that's right.

Q: Well, at the end of your period at the India desk you were moved to another position in the Department, you were made officer in charge of the Iranian desk, which made a lot of sense with your career background. I gather that was eminently to your satisfaction.

CRAWFORD: Yes. It was great. I wasn't an India lover. And that was well known on the India desk. They knew I wasn't cut and bleeding over the move.

Q: I think you may be in the majority in the Foreign Service. Had you requested this move?

CRAWFORD: No, I hadn't requested it, but John Howison, who was then in charge of GTI. It was his idea because somebody was leaving, I forget who, maybe Gordon Tiger, and they needed somebody on the desk and I said, "Fine." And I was there for about a year.

Q: You went there in 1965. Had you left the India desk by the time the Indians and Pakistanis went to war in 1965?

CRAWFORD: 1965? Which war was that? I think I had.

Q: They had one of their wars then.

CRAWFORD: Yes. I'm trying to think of which one. I remember war over East Pakistan, but that came later. That was 1973 or thereabouts.

Q: Well, if you had been on the desk you would remember it.

CRAWFORD: Yes. I think I had left.

Q: How would you characterize our relations with Iran at the time you took over?

CRAWFORD: They were quite good, but there were some people, myself included a little bit, who were a bit nervous about the indiscriminate way in which the United States responded to whatever the Shah wanted and we didn't want to upset him and we didn't want to get the Russians any more involved in Iran than they were (and they weren't - we wanted to keep them out). But my notion, and this has sort of ripened over the years, is that we were far too timid in telling the Shah what we really thought. He didn't hear any of this from us. He might have heard some of it from Julius Holmes, but not much generally. And we gave military assistance and Armin Meyer, who was our ambassador when I was on the desk, used to say, "We've got a five-year military assistance program negotiated at two-year intervals."

Q: Did you get to visit Iran during this period?

CRAWFORD: Yes. I went to Iran. I think I made one trip to Iran and it was about military assistance. Another big program was being ginned up and we had to make some assessments.

Q: We had put a lot of hardware into Iran. Well, you were on the desk about a year, I guess, and then you were sent to the Industrial College in 1966. I'm sure that was an interesting year for you.

CRAWFORD: Yes. It was pretty good. I wasn't very interested in this management theme that they went in for. I found it sort of a bore. They made such a big project out of it. I liked the curriculum at the War College better because they were more interested in the politics. Although, I have to say that on the economic side, I learned a lot there.

Q: Oh, yes. ICAF [Industrial College of the Armed Forces] has always had the reputation of being better on the economics side.

CRAWFORD: Yes. I took an economics course that was very informative. And, of course, a lot of their program was joint with the War College, so we saw and heard the same people. Anyway, it was a pretty good experience. I got a lot of reading done. They had a good library and not much stress. I certainly didn't allow myself to be stressed.

Q: It allowed you to be ready for your next post.

CRAWFORD: And, as I said, a lot of reading is good for a lot othings. I read a lot about China and the Soviet Union.

Q: Your next post was Colombo. Now, did we call it Sri Lanka then or was it still...

CRAWFORD: No. It was Ceylon.

Q: And you were political officer there?

CRAWFORD: Right. I was the political officer and head of what we called the "political-economic section" and our symbol was "P-E" and my wife saw that and she said, "Oh, now you're the big pee." [laughter]

Q: Did you welcome this assignment or not?

CRAWFORD: Actually, I would have liked to have been the DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] there at that time. When I asked why I wasn't given that job, they said, "You're not high enough rank," and so on. So I didn't get it. The assignment was - I didn't like it much. The ambassador was Andrew Corry, who was a very fine man and we became very good friends, but the trouble with the post, as I think is true of a lot of places, is that we had an ambassador, a DCM, a political section chief, an economic man, an AID [Agency for International Development] office, an attaché^{1/2}, and a CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] operation, and USIA [United States Information Agency], so we had about eight or ten people chasing around after the 20-25 people in the country that mattered to the United States. As Andrew Corry used to say, "This place is antipodal." And so U.S. interests there were really marginal. I mean in terms of Cold War interests and China and stuff like that. I didn't have enough to do and I was bored to death with some of the politics. They've got 35 parties and various shades of Trotskyite-types and so on, all buried in the past. I didn't like it much. I made no secret of it.

Q: Could you get by with English there?

CRAWFORD: Yes. We took some Singhalese, but I never used it. Our kids learned all the Singhalese swear words from the servants.

Q: Did you have many problems or difficulties?

CRAWFORD: No. Not really. I mean, I got along fine with Andrew, who was trying to make this a better, more interesting job for me, but it just wasn't there with all those people. If we had had three people. We had the same problem in Tehran, I thought. We had far too many people. I had a good friend who was the political counselor of the Italian embassy. They had an ambassador and this man, my friend, an administrative man, and a consular officer and a few staff, but that's all they had. And they knew as much about what was going on in Iran politically as we did.

Q: I found that out in other countries. With smaller missions and good officers, they knew as much as we did. Most of them. However, that is not the way we do it. We overkill.

CRAWFORD: Right.

Q: Did you travel around the country much?

CRAWFORD: Oh, yes. We traveled around a lot. It is a little place. But there were things to see and the kids were all of an age where they could travel. We went to some wild life preserves and the beaches and that was interesting.

Q: Was there unrest among the Tamils then?

CRAWFORD: No, that hadn't begun. And we were only vaguely aware of it. Ambassador Corry and I took a trip once to Jaffna, which is the center of the Tamil area, and there had been some agitation. When we were up there we drove out from this rest house that we were staying at and there were a bunch of Tamil demonstrators with some signs and they threw some stuff at us. The driver just turned down and went the other way. That was the only direct evidence I saw of them. There was this sort of political agitation about it. The Tamils felt put upon because the majority Singhalese had now taken over and the government put the Tamils in their place, they thought.

Q: What was the attitude of the Singhalese toward the United States? Was it similar to that of India or Iran?

CRAWFORD: Yes. I think so. The Singhalese (I call them the "Ceylonese," because they include both the Singhalese and the Tamils) were somewhat like the Indians, neutral, but they were much nicer than the Indians. The Ceylonese were really easy to get along with. They are delightful people, smart, capable. The Ceylonese themselves were great exports because they are so capable. It is a pity for the country that it hasn't been allowed to develop because of this Singhalese-Tamil dispute. Generally they were well disposed toward the United States. They just thought we should give them more aid or buy more tea. One of them said on the night the moon landing occurred, we were at somebody's house, we were having some party, and we were sitting out on the verandah, and, of course, you see all the stars. I don't know if you could see the moon that night, I suspect we could. Anyway, one of them looked up, and we were all looking up, and one of them said, "Now if those astronauts would just drink one cup of Ceylon tea, our fortunes would be made."

Q: You know where his heart was.

Did you get a fleet visit while you were there?

CRAWFORD: I don't think they came in. That was one thing that we weren't doing. We did have a Peace Corps mission there, which had been kicked out by Mrs. Bandaranaike before I got there. And then when the UNP (the other major party) came back into power - Washington wanted the Peace Corps back in - and they came back in.

Q: Now, you mentioned that the Ceylonese were generally favorably disposed toward the U.S., at least more favorably than the Indians.

CRAWFORD: I thought so. Of course, I never lived in India, and I'm sure there were lots of exceptions.

Q: This was during the Vietnam War. Did that have any effect on...?

CRAWFORD: It did a little bit, because they had some trouble with the Chinese at the time and the Chinese didn't like something the Ceylonese had done, so they were camped out around the Ceylonese embassy in Beijing and so there was a lot in the newspaper about this and what was going to happen. I remember making several trips to the Foreign Office to discuss this, like what was going on, what we were going to do and what the Chinese were demanding. The Ceylonese were keenly aware of the Chinese presence in the area and the Vietnam War affecting the relationship between the United States and China.

Q: All in all, I gather that the government there was fairlcooperative with us.

CRAWFORD: Oh, yes. I'd say very cooperative. The prime minister when I was there was Dudley Senenaika and he was the head of the UNP party, which was the majority party and they were quite good about cooperating with us. Anything the United States wanted, not that we wanted a lot, but we didn't have any difficulty with them. You know, landing rights, or things like that, planes came in occasionally, or various other things that we wanted. We were interested a little bit in all these things.

Q: Which was covered out of Ceylon...?

CRAWFORD: Yes. The ambassador to Colombo was also accredited to thMaldiv Islands and so were several on the staff. I was accredited.

Q: Did you get down there?

CRAWFORD: Yes. I went down there once. I was glad I didn't livthere. Although it is quite a famous tourist spot now.

Q: Oh, is it? Well, after two years in Ceylon you were brought bacto the [State] Department. Was this something you welcomed?

CRAWFORD: I heard that I was going to be assigned to Lesotho in South Africa and I got the post report and looked into it. My main concern was for the children. We had five children and they were school age. They were all in school except the youngest one and the older ones, at least as far as we could divine from the post report, would have to go to some boarding school in Kenya or someplace 500 miles away and we looked at that situation and a part of the world we weren't familiar with and I said I didn't want to do that. We got word back from Personnel from Jake Millar there (I knew Jake from the India days). He said, "Well, the alternative would be a Washington assignment here in this office." And I said, "That suits me fine." So we came back. Andrew had asked me if I wanted to stay in Ceylon and be DCM because Jack Miklos, the DCM, had been transferred, I think back to Washington to be the country director for Iran and I would have been happy to do the job, but we had been there for two years, and I said, "Well, fine, but I'd like to go home on leave because my wife wants to see her mother, she's old, and we've got things to do and we just need that." Mainly, I just wanted to get back to talk with somebody in the Department to find out what my status was. I never said that to Andrew, but he must have divined that. He was a very sharp character. But anyway, he didn't want to do that because that would have been too long a gap and he said that I could take R&R [rest and relaxation leave] and go to Singapore or someplace. But I said, "We'd been to Singapore when we took R&R last year, and I don't want to do that." So I said, "Fine, I'd like to have this job, but only if I can go home on leave and then come back." And he didn't agree to that. So I said, "Okay," and there were no hard feelings.

Q: You just couldn't agree, that was it.

CRAWFORD: Yes. He had his reasons, which I understood, but we didn't have the same interests.

Q: So in 1969 you came back and found yourself in Personnel. Where were you doing there?

CRAWFORD: I was running, for part of the time, economic assignments, mid-career economic officers.

Q: Who was your supervisor there?

CRAWFORD: Well, Jake Millar was there for a while, and then Cleo Noel was there. And Ed Dobbins was there. I can't remember. I think Cleo was there when I first got there, and then Ed Dobbins came in, then Jake went off someplace else, I don't know where.

Q: Cleo went off to Sudan.

CRAWFORD: Yes, he left there to go to be ambassador to Khartoum.

Q: Were you in Personnel when the young Turks report came out?

CRAWFORD: ...When I worked in Personnel during this "personnel revolution," (or whatever it was), I don't remember that there was any particular impact, as far as we were concerned. I know that we got reorganized. I guess the setting up of the cone system. No, maybe that already existed, because I was doing economic officers. But instead of doing economic officers on my own, I suddenly had a boss who also did this, and maybe somebody else. An example of the Department's reorganization: improve and streamline things by putting in another layer.

Q: Good. We do it all the time. That way you have more deputassistant secretaries.

CRAWFORD: Exactly.

Q: Looking back on it, how do you assess the working in the personnesystem at [the] State [Department]?

CRAWFORD: I didn't think much of it. I thought it depended so much on who you knew and what your connections were and what your corridor reputation was. And those aren't things to be dismissed, but it seemed to me that everybody would have been better off if there had been a frank recognition of that state of affairs. I remember once, I had some candidate for some job in the Department. I think it was in the secretariat. We had these printouts from the people who did these computer runs (which were always confusing). I knew what this guy's background was, but the computer had made a mistake, the printout was mistaken. It said that he had a law degree from Howard University, and it should have been Harvard University. When I put this guy forward, they saw Howard University and they didn't want him. When I said, "That's mistaken, he went to Harvard, " they wanted him suddenly. That seemed to me typical of so much that went on. We had this elaborate thing about cones and the rollover, the balance, and so on. It was all right if nobody cared about some individual. But if an individual had some connections or a good reputation, or somebody was looking out for him, then now he seemed to get taken care of. There was one case of a fellow, he was a "dog on the market" (in Personnel lingo used in private), we flogged him here, we flogged him there, and nobody wanted him. Finally, we managed to get him assigned to some job in Bangkok. Reluctantly, EA [East Asia] accepted him, I think. Then he was all set to go, and in the meantime something else better came up for him. The people in EA treated him as though he had been canonized, they couldn't possibly release him. I used to call it the "Apotheosis of Erwin Pernick," suddenly he was deified. I found the system not very inspiring. And part of it was personal, because I was there for a couple of years and I didn't get anything out of that, in terms of somebody to look out for me and give me some terrific job.

Q: Did you have any relation with the inspectors there at all?

CRAWFORD: I don't really remember it.

Q: How about with AFSA [American Foreign Service Association]? Did they give you any problems, or did you give them problems?

CRAWFORD: We didn't have much to do... AFSA and the [State] Department were negotiating this agreement at the time, thus we were generally aware of it, I was, but I never got in trouble.

Q: After two years in Personnel, you were moved to the Department of the Interior, where you were on the Micronesian status negotiations. This is a complete change of pace. Were you the only [Department of] State man on this negotiating team?

CRAWFORD: No, there was a small group: State, Defense, USIA [United States Information Agency], and Interior that ran this office. The ambassador at large, who was in charge, was a man who was head of the Asia Foundation and had been Assistant Secretary of Defense.

The principal State [Department] operator was Art Hummel. He's the one who recruited me. In the meantime, I'd started law school. When I went to Personnel, I thought, my Foreign Service career didn't look so hot, and maybe I should think about something else. I started going to night law school and the hours in Personnel were regular, predictable. So I had already started doing that. I told Art that I was going to law school and I'd like to continue and we thought it would work out.

Hayden Williams was the ambassador at large. He was the president's personal representative for Micronesian Status Negotiations. The Defense man was Bill Crowe, who was later Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and ambassador to London. A wonderful fellow. A great experience working with him. I don't really remember the others much.

Q: Of course, there was a major Pentagon interest in this.

CRAWFORD: Yes, because they wanted the real estate.

Q: What was our relationship with the UN on this?

CRAWFORD: It was a trusteeship.

Q: Were they prodding us to get rid of it?

CRAWFORD: No, I think that there was some thought that these trusteeships can't go on forever, and we had to report every year. Some interest in Micronesia in some different status. They wanted to be states, wanted to be like Puerto Rico, or some situation where they had a better handle on their own business and weren't simply wards of the Department of the Interior.

Q: Did you get to visit the area?

CRAWFORD: Too many times. Remote Pacific Islands. I had my fill of tropical islands. Hong Kong is sort of a tropical island, and that wasn't so bad. But I'd been in Ceylon, and that really is a tropical island. In this job, I was only there for a year and a half, I went maybe three or four times [to Micronesia]. We had a couple of meetings in Hawaii and we had meetings in Palau, which is almost to Manila. We had meetings in Guam.

Q: What were the problems during the negotiations?

CRAWFORD: There were lots of problems, and a lot of them were sort of silly. Hayden Williams and the U.S. government wanted to have some sort of serious negotiation with these people. They have to sit down and they've got to understand what our interests are and we want to understand what their interests are. As far as I could tell the Micronesians, at least the ones we ran into, were mostly interested in drinking beer and fixing things up so that they would get better jobs than they had already. There was a real culture gap there, because Hayden thought we ought to work as in the Pentagon and we're doing important national security matters, and the Micronesians, mostly they didn't care. Those who did care were interested in independence or making some arrangement with the Japanese, or anyway, doing better, and getting the United States to pay for it.

Q: But we were not interested in independence for them, were we?

CRAWFORD: No, we wanted some sort of association, a commonwealth arrangement. We ended up more or less with what we wanted and what some of them wanted. I think Palau is independent. Anyway, we had this big, elaborate discussion. The Micronesians hired Paul Warnke to be their lawyer. I knew him before through a mutual friend, a charming man. He looked at this encounter with, I suppose, bemusement (if not amusement). Anyway, it was just sort of an odd thing that looked like it was never going to end.

Q: Were there differences among the U.S. representatives there, were you pretty much of one mind?

CRAWFORD: There were some differences. There were some big differences at one point between the State Department and the Micronesian Status Negotiation office, because the Department, or UNP, wanted a resolution to this. They wanted to respond to the UN [United Nations] call for some end to the trusteeship and some permanent arrangement. Whereas, I think the Defense Department was far less interested, didn't care what the UN thought about it. They were interested in the real estate and in the strategic interests in that part of the world.

Q: How about Congressional interest. Was there any?

CRAWFORD: I don't really remember much. A certain amount, but nothing that we had to get too excited about. The usual connections I suppose. There was some correspondence, I can't even remember, and I think Hayden Williams would go talk to people in the committees.

Q: Well, after two years, that came to an end. You were then back in the [State] Department, back in the Personnel section. But this time, with the grievance side, which is an interesting assignment for anyone, I would think.

CRAWFORD: Depressing.

Q: This is one you did not request, I gather?

CRAWFORD: No, actually it was okay. I didn't want to stay over in Interior any longer. And in the meantime, to be perfectly honest, my Foreign Service career wasn't going any place. I was about to finish law school, and the time in class arrangements were such at that time, I thought, in 1974, I'd be out. I was busy thinking about that. So, this job in Personnel sort of fit in with my law school studies and again, the hours were predictable and so on. Earle Ritchie was the head of that, and I talked to him and I said, "Fine." It was fine. He was a nice person to work with.

Q: Did you feel there were too many grievances?

CRAWFORD: I thought some of them were frivolous. There were some that were honest cases. I think the [State] Department solves some of them in a perfectly fair and responsible manner.

Q: So, you would suggest that the grievance staff is necessary.

CRAWFORD: Yes. I think there ought to be an avenue for that, because it never had been before.

Q: How open is the grievance process?

CRAWFORD: You mean, open to people who want to grieve?

Q: Yes, and also, if I wanted to come in and sit in on your grievance, could I do that?

CRAWFORD: I don't think so. I think we saw the person individually and assured them that our treatment of their case was going to be confidential.

Q: But, I couldn't bring my lawyer with me?

CRAWFORD: Well, I think you could, if you got to some point. Some of these went to hearings. I remember one hearing that I was involved in, and a grievant brought her lawyer along. That was, if they got to that point, and they wanted to do it, I think it was perfectly okay.

Q: Well, that was about a year, I take it.

CRAWFORD: Yes.

Q: And then you transferred to IO, International Organization, where you worked in United Nations political affairs and human rights. Had you asked for that assignment?

CRAWFORD: No, but it was something that I had heard about, and I was interested in the UN aspect. I was just finishing up law school. And also, I'd mentioned that the time-in-class issue, I thought it was going to be '74, but the [State] Department, in its wisdom and generosity, changed the rules. I was too young to retire voluntarily, and, with the new time in class rules, I couldn't retire. I needed income and I wasn't ready just to quit. So I had the job of staying in the Department until I was time in class or until I got promoted, which didn't seem likely. So anyway, this was the job that I heard about. I thought it would be interesting, international legal affairs. And it turned out to be quite interesting. One of the things I handled was torture and terrorism. My kids said, "You have a lot of experience with that, dad. You must be pretty good."

Q: Was there any indication that Secretary [of State Henry] Kissinger took any interest in human rights?

CRAWFORD: Not that I recall. It didn't percolate to me. I never had the impression from anything I heard then or that I remember, or anything I've read since, that that was on Kissinger's radar screen.

Q: That had to wait until the Jimmy Carter era.

CRAWFORD: But I was there for a while, and I have some vivid memories of that, because Warren Christopher was the undersecretary. He was in charge of the human rights effort. Pat Derian was Assistant Secretary for Human Rights Affairs. Anyway, there were a lot of meetings at that time. I'd left in August of '77, so beyond that I really don't know, but from about February on through the part of '77 that I was there, there were numerous meetings. Including at least one, and maybe more, with Warren Christopher, Pat Derian and Jules Katz (he was assistant secretary for economic affairs), and there were some vivid arguments about what you're going to do, how you're going to do it - Argentina has a terrible human rights record, and how can we screw them? Jules Katz said: Look, we are asking Argentina for this, that and the other thing. We want them to assist us with our embargo of the Soviet Union or whatever was going on. And he said, "You can't do both these things at the same time. You somehow or other have to balance." Pat Derian, who was a very nice person, didn't agree. She thought, there is no other issue that we need to deal with.

Q: What did we think of a UN human rights commission?

CRAWFORD: I think we were a little wary of it, because the man who was the secretary was a Dutchman, and the Dutch were much more liberal on human rights issues. And then we constantly had to worry about the Israeli-Palestinian question, because that came up all the time. It was a matter of some concern. Certainly in the Carter administration, the secretary and the upper reaches of the Department were interested, very interested in this. Earlier, I don't think there was much interest except squashing things that we didn't like. Chile was one big issue, and the Arab-Israeli thing constantly.

Q: What were some of the issues you handled?

CRAWFORD: I recall the Arab-Israeli thing all the time, and India and Pakistan. Chile, particularly. Very interested in Chile with the human rights commission, always putting out dictates about this, that, and the other thing. We were busy supporting Pinochet. While we understood the human rights problems, in our office, we had to wrestle with this sort of thing. It was a difficult problem. It was a classic diplomatic problem of balancing the interests.

Q: That leads me to ask you, did you have problems with other area of the Department?

CRAWFORD: Well, I wouldn't say "problems." We had a lot of discussion with ARA [the State Department's former "Bureau of Inter-American Affairs"] because they didn't want us to do anything that would upset Pinochet, or upset the relationship. The same with Argentina, but Chile particularly. And of course, we wanted to, in the UN and in the [State] Department as someone devoted to human rights interests, we wanted to acknowledge the real concern of the international community complaining about human rights in Chile. So there was the argument about what are you going to do, how are you going to go about it. Bill Luers was Assistant Secretary for a while. They had their own problems with "localitis," and we had our interests that were sort of, in their view, do-gooding interests.

Q: That was an interesting tour, I'm sure.

CRAWFORD: Yes. There were a lot of interesting questions that came up.

Q: How long did that tour last?

CRAWFORD: I was there for two years and in the meantime I had graduated from law school and had been busy trying to figure out what the next step was.

Q: Then you went to Capitol Hill, didn't you?

CRAWFORD: Then, through a Foreign Service friend of mine who had worked for Adlai Stevenson I got a job this guy's job with Adlai Stevenson as his staff person for defense and foreign affairs. It was a great job. It was one of the nicest jobs I ever had with the exception of being in Isfahan. It was a perfect job. It didn't pay anything, because we had various [salary] caps. I got an annuity from the [State] Department.

Q: But you could see what the Department looked like from the Hill [Congress].

CRAWFORD: I certainly could.

Q: Not always a plus.

CRAWFORD: I remember being on a desk, and I thought, I was pretty sympathetic to people in Congress, but these people in Congress had these constituents who want some sort of answers and they have to give them to them. And it doesn't do any good to say, "Well, we can't do anything about it" or to give them some sort of muddleheaded answer. They want some precise information. You're not going to give away the store, but you have to tell them what the facts are.

Q: And it isn't always easy.

CRAWFORD: No, because we are busy, if not lying to one another, dissimulating.

Q: That's called "diplomacy," isn't it?

CRAWFORD: Yes. [laughter.]

Q: How long did you stay there?

CRAWFORD: I was there for about three and a half years.

Q: And then you went to the Nissan Motor Corporation?

CRAWFORD: Right.

Q: What did you do there?

CRAWFORD: I had a lot of fun. Nissan paid a lot of college tuitions. I am eternally grateful to them for that. It turned out to be a very nice encounter. Of course, some of the Japanese were very difficult to deal with, a couple of them very difficult. But by and large, I handled trade issues, congressional issues, political issues, and I was an advisor or consultant to the man who ran the office. As my wife said at the time, "Did you ever think after all those years in the Foreign Service you'd end up a local employee?" And I said, "No," but that was exactly what I was. I was the trusted local employee.

Q: Well, that was an interesting period, I'm sure.

CRAWFORD: Yes. It was a very good job and interesting work. I worked there for ten years.

Q: In summation, looking back on the Foreign Service, what are your views on it as a career for a young man or young woman?

CRAWFORD: Well, I would have to take the view that I have gotten from a lot of young people, that the Foreign Service is one of a number of possibilities, and you ought not to be locked into it. You ought to be prepared to move to other areas, and that is certainly not the impression I had when I joined the Foreign Service. It was like joining a monastic order. You stayed there for life. They looked after you and, while a few people left under a cloud, or somebody left to manage the family foundation, almost everybody stayed and, by and large, they were looked after. I got the sense, from my own later career, that the Foreign Service lost interest in me long before I lost interest in the Foreign Service. But I understand how young people feel. My own children, my son in Rome, he has worked for the United Nations almost exclusively, except now he is freelancing. But he sort of prepared to do this or do that.

Q: They shift around where we never thought of doing such things.

I want to thank you very much.

CRAWFORD: It has been a trip down nostalgia lane.

Q: This is Thomas Dunnigan and the date is January 17, 2002. I've been talking to former Foreign Service Officer Frank Crawford on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training.

End of interview